I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also.

C111.d.16

OR, A

Discourse

Touching

PRAYER,

From 1 *COR.* Xiv. 15.

Wherein is briefly discovered,

I. What Prayer is.
II. What it is to pray with the Spirit.
III. What it is to pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

By JOHN BUNYAN.

The Fourth Edition.

But we know not what we should pray for as we ought, only the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, Rom. 8: 26.

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Rob. Midgley.

I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo.

PRAYER is an Ordinance of God, and that to be uſed both in Publick and Private; yea, ſuch an Ordinance, as brings thoſe that have the Spirit of Supplication, into great familiarity with God; and is alſo ſo prevalent in Action, that it getteth of God, both for the Perſon that prayeth, and for them that are prayed for, great things. It is the Opener of the Heart of God, and a means by which the Soul, though empty, is filled. By Prayer the Chriſtian can open his Heart to God, as to a Friend, and obtain freſh Teſtimony of God's Friendſhip to him. I might ſpend many words in diſtinguiſhing between Publick and Private Prayer; as alſo between that in the Heart, and that with a vocal

Voice: Something also might be spoken, to distinguish between the Gifts and Graces of Prayer: But eschewing this method, my business shall be at this time, only to shew you the very heart of Prayer, without which all your lifting up, both of Hands, and Eyes, and Voices, will be to no purpose at all: *I will pray with the Spirit.*

The method that I shall go in at this time, shall be,

First, To shew you what true Prayer is.

Secondly, To shew you what it is to pray with the Spirit.

Thirdly, What it is to pray with the Spirit, and Understanding also.

And so, *Fourthly*, To make some short Use and Application of what shall be spoken.

I. *What Prayer is.*

For the *First*, What Prayer is.

Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the Heart or Soul to

to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the holy Spirit, for such things as God hath promised, or according to the Word, for the good of the Church, with submission, in Faith, to the Will of God.

In this Description are these Seven things.

1. It is a sincere,
2. A sensible,
3. An affectionate pouring out of the Soul to God, through Christ,
4. By the strength or assistance of the Spirit,
5. For such things as God hath promised, or according to his Word,
6. For the good of the Church,
7. With Submission in Faith to the Will of God.

For the *first* of these; *It is a sincere* pouring out of the Soul to God.

Sincerity is such a Grace, as runs through all the Graces of God in us, and through all the actings of a Christian, and hath the sway in them too, or else their actings are not any thing

regarded of God, and ſo of and in Prayer; of which particularly *David* ſpeaketh, when he mentioneth Prayer, *Pſal.* 66. 17, 18. *I cried unto the Lord with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer*, Pſal. 17. 1, 2, 3, 4. Part of the exerciſe of Prayer, is *ſincerity*; without which God looks not upon it as Prayer, in a good ſence: *Then ſhall you ſeek me, and find me, when you ſhall ſearch for me with your whole heart*, Jer. 29. 12, 13.

The want of this, made the Lord reject their Prayers in *Hoſ.* 7. 14. where he ſaith, *They have not cried unto me with their heart*, (that is, in *ſincerity*,) *when they howled upon their beds.* But for a pretence, for a ſhew, in hypocriſie, to be ſeen of Men, and applauded for the ſame they prayed.

Sincerity was that which Chriſt commended in *Nathaniel*, when he was under the Fig-tree; *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom their is no guile.* Probably this good Man was pouring out of his

his Soul to God in Prayer under the Fig-tree, and that in a ſincere and unfeigned ſpirit before the Lord. The Prayer that hath this in it, has one of the principal Ingredients, is the Prayer that God looks at. Thus, *the Prayer of the Upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8.

And why muſt *Sincerity* be one of the Eſſentials of Prayer, which is accepted of God, but becauſe *ſincerity* carries the ſoul in all ſimplicity to open its heart to God, and to tell him the caſe plainly, without equivocation; to condemn it ſelf plainly without diſſembling; to cry to God heartily, without complementing. *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus: Thou haſt chaſtized me, and I was chaſtized, as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoak*, Jer. 31. 18. *Sincerity* is the ſame in a corner alone, as it is before the face of all the world. It knows not how to wear two Vizards, one for an appearance before Men, and another for a ſhort ſnatch in a corner; but it muſt have God, and be with him in the Duty of Prayer. It is not Lip-

labour that it doth regard; for it is the heart that God looks at, and that which *sincerity* looks at, and that which Prayer comes from, if it be that Prayer which is accompanied with *sincerity*.

Secondly, It is a sincere and *sensible* pouring out of the heart or soul. It is not, as many take it to be, even a few babbling, prating, complementory Expressions, but a *sensible feeling* there is in the heart. Prayer hath in it a sensibleness of divers things: Sometimes sense of sin, sometimes of mercy received, sometimes of the readiness of God to give mercy, *&c.*

First, A sense of the want of mercy, by reason of the danger of sin. The Soul, I say, feels; and from feeling, sighs, groans, and breaks at the heart. For right Prayer bubbleth out of the heart, when it is over-pressed with grief and bitterness, as blood is forced out of the flesh, by reason of some heavy burthen that lyeth upon it. 1 *Sam.* 1. 10. *David* roars, cryes, weeps, faints at the heart, fails at the Eyes, loseth his

his moisture, *&c. Psal.* 69. 3. & 38. 8,9,10. *Hezekiah* mourns like a Dove, *Isa.* 38. 14. *Ephraim* bemoans himself, *Jer.* 31.18. *Peter* weeps bitterly, *Mat.* 26.57. Christ hath (*Heb.* 5.7.) strong cryings and tears; and all this, from a sense of the Justice of God, the Guilt of Sin, the Pains of Hell and Destruction: *The sorrows of death compassed me about, the pains of hell got hold upon me, and I found trouble and sorrow: Then cried I unto the Lord*, Psal. 116. 3, 4. And in another place, *Psal.* 77. 2. *My sore ran in the night.* Again, *Psal.* 38. 6. *I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* In all these Instances, and in hundreds more that might be named, you may see that Prayer carrieth in it a sensible feeling Disposition, and that first from a sense of Sin.

2*dly*, Sometimes there is a sweet sense of mercy received; encouraging, comforting, strengthning, enlivening, enlightning mercy, *&c.*

Thus *David* pours out his soul to bless, and praise, and admire the great God, for

for his loving-kindneſs to ſuch poor vile Wretches. *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diſeaſes, and crowneth thee with loving kindneſs, and tender mercies; who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction, who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good things, ſo that thy youth is renewed as the Eagles.* And thus is the Prayer of Saints ſometimes turned into Praiſe and Thankſgiving, and yet are Prayers ſtill.

This is a Myſtery: God's People pray with their Praiſes, as it is written, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer, with ſupplication and thanksgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.* A ſenſible Thankſgiving for Mercies received, *is a mighty Prayer in the ſight of God*; it prevails with him unſpeakably.

3*dly*, In Prayer, there is ſome times in the Soul a ſenſe of Mercy to be received. This again ſets the Soul all on a flame.

a flame. *Thou, O Lord God* (saith *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27.) *hast revealed unto thy Servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy Servant found in his heart to pray unto thee.*

This provoked *Jacob*, *David*, *Daniel*, with others, even a sence of Mercies to be received, as you may see, *Gen.* 32. 9. 10, 11, 12. *Dan.* 9. 2, 3, 4. which caused them, not by fits and starts, nor yet in a foolish frothy way to babble over a few words written in a paper; but mightily, fervently, and continually, to groan out their conditions before the Lord, as being sensible; sensible, I say, of their wants, their misery, and the willingness of God to shew mercy.

A good sence of sin, and the wrath of God, with some encouragement from God to come unto him, is a better *Common-Prayer-Book*, than that which is taken out of the Papistical * Mass-Book;

* *See* M. Fox *his citation of the Mass, in the last Volume of the Book of Mart.*

being

being the Scraps and Fragments of the devices of ſome Popes, ſome Friars, and I wot not what.

3. Prayer is a *ſincere, ſenſible, and an affectionate* pouring out of the ſoul to God. O the heat, ſtrength, life, vigor, and *affection* that is in right Prayer.

As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo longeth my ſoul after thee, O God, Pſal. 42. 1. *I have longed for thy Precepts; I have longed after thy Salvation*, Pſal. 119. 40. *My ſoul longeth, yea, fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my heart and my fleſh cryeth out for the living God*, Pſal. 84. 2. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all times*, Pſal. 119. 20. Mark ye here, *My ſoul longeth, it longeth, it longeth*, &c. Oh what affection is here diſcovered in Prayer!

The like you have in *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9. 19. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do; defer not for thy Names ſake, O my God.* Every ſyllable carrieth a mighty *vehemency* in it.

This

This is called the *fervent*, or the *working* Prayer, by *James*, Jam. 5. And ſo again, *Luke* 22. 44. *And being in an Agony he prayed moſt earneſtly*; or had his affections more and more drawn out after God for his helping hand.

Oh how wide are the moſt of men with their Prayers, from this Prayer, that is Prayer in God's account! Alas, the greateſt part of men make no conſcience at all of the duty; and as for them that do, it is to be feared that many of them are very great ſtrangers to a ſincere, ſenſible, and *affectionate* pouring out their hearts or ſouls to God but even content themſelves with a little lip-labour, & bodily exerciſe, mumbling over a few imaginary Prayers.

When the Affections are indeed engaged in Prayer, then, then the whole man is engaged, and that in ſuch ſort, that the ſoul will ſpend it ſelf to nothing as it were, rather than it will go without that good deſire, even communion and ſolace with Chriſt. And hence it is, that the Saints have ſpent their

their ſtrengths, and loſt their lives, rather than go without the bleſſing, *Pſal.* 69. 3. *Pſal.* 38. 9, 10. *Gen.* 32, 24, 27, 26.

All this is too too evident by the ignorance, profaneſs and ſpirit of envy, that reigns in the hearts of thoſe men that are ſo hot for the Forms, and not the Power of Prayer: Scarce one of forty among them, know what it is to be born again, to have communion with the Father through the Son; to feel the power of grace ſanctifying their hearts; but for all their Prayers, they ſtill live curſed, drunken, whoriſh, and abominable Lives, full of Malice, Envy, Deceit, Perſecuting of the dear Children of God. Oh what a dreadful after-clap is coming upon them! which all their hypocritical aſſembling themſelves together, with all their prayers ſhall never be able to help them againſt, or ſhelter them from.

Again, *It is a pouring out of the heart or ſoul*: There is in Prayer an unboſoming of a man's ſelf, an opening of the Heart to God, an affectionate pouring

ing out of the Soul in requeſts, ſighs, and groans. *All my deſires are before thee* (ſaith *David*, Pſal. 38. 9.) *my groanings are not hid from thee.* And again, *My ſoul thirſteth for God, even for the living God: When ſhall I come and appear before God? When I remember theſe things, I pour out my ſoul in me*, Pſal. 42. 2, 3. Mark; I pour out my ſoul: It is an Expreſſion ſignifying, that in Prayer, there goeth the very life and whole ſtrength to God. As in another place; *Pſal.* 61. 8. *Truſt in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him.* This is the Prayer to which the Promiſe is made, for the delivering of a poor creature out of captivity and thraldom. *If from thence thou ſhalt ſeek the Lord, thou ſhalt find him, if thou ſeek him with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul* Deut. 4. 29.

Again, it is a pouring out of the heart or ſoul *to God.* This ſheweth alſo the Excellency of the Spirit of prayer: it is the great *God* to which it retires; *When ſhall I come and appear before God?*

And it argueth, that the ſoul that thus prayeth indeed, ſees an emptineſs in all things *under Heaven*; that in *God* alone there is reſt and ſatisfaction for the Soul. *Now ſhe that is a Widow, and deſolate, truſteth in God*, 1 Tim. 5. 5. So ſaith *David*, *In thee, O Lord, do I put my truſt, let me never be put to confuſion; deliver me in thy righteouſneſs, and cauſe me to eſcape; encline thine ear to me, and ſave me: be thou my ſtrong habitation, whereunto I may continually reſort: For thou art my rock and my fortreſs; deliver me, O God, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man: For thou art my hope, O Lord my God, thou art my truſt from my youth.* Many in a wording way ſpeak of God; but right Prayer makes God his hope, ſtay, and *all*. Right *Prayer* ſees nothing ſubſtantial, and worth the looking after, but *God*: And that as (as I ſaid before) it doth in a *ſincere, ſenſible, and affectionate way*.

Again, It is a ſincere ſenſible affectionate pouring out of the heart, or ſoul to God, *Through Chriſt*. This,

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through Christ, must needs be added, or else it is to be questioned, whether it be Prayer, though in appearance it be never so eminent, or eloquent.

Christ is the *way* through whom the Soul hath admittance to *God*, *John* 14. 6. and without whom it is impossible that so much as one desire should come into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. *If you ask any thing in my Name, whatsoever you ask the Father in my Name, I will do it*, John 14. 13, 14. This was *Daniel*'s way in praying for the People of God; he did it in the name of Christ: *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake*, Dan. 9. 17. And so *David*, *for thy Names sake*, (that is, for thy Christ's sake) *pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*, Psal. 25. 11.

But now, it is not every one that maketh mention of Christ's Name in prayer, that doth indeed and in truth effectually pray to God in the Name of Christ, or *through him*. This coming

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to God *through Christ*, is the hardeſt part that is found in Payer: A man may more eaſily be ſenſible of his works, I, and ſincerely too deſire mercy, and yet not be able to come to God by Chriſt. That man that comes to God by Chriſt, he muſt *firſt* have the knowledge of him: *For he that comes to God, muſt believe that he is*, Heb. 11. 6. And ſo he that comes to God through Chriſt, muſt be enabled to know Chriſt. *Lord*, (ſaith *Moſes*, Exod. 33. 11.) *ſhew me thy way, that I may know thee.*

This Chriſt, none but the Father can reveal, *Mat.* 11. 27. *Mat.* 16. 16. And to come through Chriſt, is for the ſoul to be enabled of God, to ſhroud it ſelf under the ſhadow of the Lord Jeſus, as a man ſhroudeth himſelf under a thing for ſafeguard.

Hence it is that *David* ſo often terms Chriſt his *ſhield*, *buckler*, *tower*, *fortreſs*, *rock of defence*, &c. *Pſal.* 18. 2. *Pſal.* 27. 1. *Pſal.* 28. 1. not only becauſe by him he overcame his enemies, but becauſe through him he found favour with God

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the Father. And so he saith to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. 1. *Fear not, I am thy shield*, &c.

The man then that comes to God through Christ must have faith by which he puts on Christ, and in him appears, before God. Now he that hath Faith, is born of God (*John* 3 5, 7.) born again, and so become one of the Sons of God (*Joh.* 1. 12.) by virtue of which he is joined to Christ, and made a *member of him*, Ephes. 5. 30. And therefore, *Secondly*, He, as a member of Christ, comes to God, I say, as a member of him, so that God looks on that man as a part of Christ, part of his body, flesh and bones, united to him by election, conversion, illumination, the Spirit being conveyed into the heart of that poor man by God; so that now he comes to God in Christ's merits, in his blood, righteousness, victory, intercession, and so stands before him; being accepted in his beloved, *Ephes.* 1. 6. And because this poor creature is thus a member of the Lord Jesus, and under

der this consideration, hath admittance to come to God: therefore, by virtue of this union, also, is the holy Spirit conveyed into him, whereby he is able to pour out himself (to wit) his soul before God, with his audience. And this leads me to the next, or fourth particular.

4. Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God through Christ, *by the strength or assistance of the Spirit*. For these things do so depend one upon another, that it is impossible it should be Prayer without there be a joint concurrence of them: for though it be never so famous, yet without these things, it is only such Prayer as is rejected of God. For without a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart to God, it is but lip-labour; and if it be not through Christ, it falleth far short of ever sounding well in the ears of God. So also, if it be not in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, it is but like the Sons of *Aaron* offering wit'

with ſtrange fire, *Levit* 10. 1, 2. But I ſhall ſpeak more to this under the ſecond head; and therefore in the mean time, that which is not petitioned through the teachings and aſſiſtance of the Spirit, it is not poſſible that it ſhould be according to the will of God, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27.

But to proceed.

5. Prayer is a ſincere, ſenſible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or ſoul to God, through Chriſt, *in the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of the Spirit, for ſuch things as God hath promiſed*, &c. *Mat.* 6. 6, 7, 8. Prayer it is, when it is within the compaſs of God's Word and it is blaſphemy, or at beſt vain babling, when the Petition is beſide the Book.

David therefore, ſtill in his prayer, kept his eye on the Word of God, *My ſoul*, ſaith he, *cleaveth to the duſt; quicken me according to thy Word*, Pſal. 119. 25, 28. And again, *Pſal.* 119. 41, 42, 58, 65, 74 81, 82, 107. 147, 154, 169, 170. *My ſoul melteth for heavineſs; ſtrengthen me accor-*

cording to thy Word. And, *Remember thy Word unto thy ſervant, on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* And indeed, the holy Ghoſt doth not immediately quicken and ſtir up the heart of the Chriſtian without, but by, with, and through the Word, by bringing that to the heart, and by opening of that whereby the man is provoked to go to the Lord, and to tell him how it is with him; and alſo to argue, and ſupplicate, according to the Word.

Thus it was with *Daniel*, that mighty Prophet of the Lord. He underſtanding by Books, that the Captivity of the Children of *Iſrael* was hard at an end; Then according to that word, he maketh his Prayer to God.

I Daniel (ſaith he, *Dan.* 9. 2,3.) *underſtood by Books* (viz. the writings of *Jeremiah*) *the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, that he would accompliſh ſeventy years in the deſolation of Jeruſalem. And I ſet my face to the Lord God, to ſeek by Prayer and ſupplication, with faſting, and ſack-*

cloth

cloth and ashes. So that, I say, as the Spirit is the Helper and the Governour of the Soul, when it prayeth according to the Will of God; so it guideth by and according to the Word of God, and his Promise. Hence it is that our Lord Jesus Christ himself did make a stop, altho' his Life lay at stake for it. *I could now pray to my Father, and he should give me more than twelve legions of Angels; but how then must the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* Mat. 26.53,54. As who should say, were there but a word for it in the Scripture, I should soon be out of the hands of mine Enemies, I should be helpt by Angels; but the Scripture will not warrant this kind of Praying, for that saith otherwise: It is a praying then according to the Word & Promise. The *Spirit* by the *Word* must direct, as well in the manner, as in the matter of Prayer: *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also.* But there is no Understanding without the Word: *For if they reject the Word of the Lord, what wisdom is in them?* Jer. 8.9.

6. *For the good of the Church.* This Clause reacheth in whatsoever tendeth either to the honour of God, Christ's advancement, or his People's benefit. For God, and Christ, and his People, are so linked together, that if the good of one be prayed for, to wit, the Church; the glory of God, and advancement of Christ, must needs be included. For, as Christ is in the Father, so the Saints are in Christ, *Joh.* 17. 23. And he that toucheth the Saints, toucheth the Apple of God's Eye, *Deut.* 32. 10. *Psal.* 17. 8. *Zach.* 2. 8. And therefore pray for the *Peace of Jerusalem*, and you pray for all that is required of you, *Ps.* 122. 6. & 41. 8. *Isa.* 62. 6, 7. For *Jerusalem* will never be in perfect peace, until she be in Heaven; and there is nothing that Christ doth more desire, than to have her there. That also is the place that God, through Christ, hath given to her. He then that prayeth for the peace and good of *Sion*, or the Church, doth ask that in Prayer, which Christ hath purchased with his Blood; and

and also that which the Father hath given to him as the price thereof. Now he that prayeth for this, must pray for abundance of Grace for the Church, for help against all its temptations, that God would let nothing be too hard for it, and that all things might work together for its good; that God would keep them blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, to his glory, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation. And this is the substance of Christ's own Prayer, in the Seventeenth of *John*. And all *Paul*'s Prayers did run that way, as one of his Prayers do eminently shew, in *Ephes.* 1. 16, to the 21. and *Chap.* 3. *Ver.* 14, to the 19. with *Col.* 1. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. And *Phil.* 1. 9, 10, 11. he saith, *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere, and without offence, until the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Je-*

ſus Chriſt, to the glory and praiſe of God.

But a ſhort Prayer, you ſee, and yet full of good deſires for the Church from the beginning to the end: That it may ſtand and go on, and that in the moſt excellent frame of Spirit, even without blame; ſincere, and without offence, until the day of Chriſt, let its temptations or perſecutions be what they will. And becauſe, as I ſaid, Prayer doth ſubmit to the Will of God, and ſay, *Thy Will be done*, as Chriſt hath taught us, *Mat.* 6. 10. therefore the People of the Lord in humility are to lay themſelves, and their Prayers, and all that they have, at the foot of their God, to be diſpoſed of by him, as he in his heavenly wiſdom ſeeth beſt: Yet not doubting but God will anſwer the deſire of his People that way that ſhall be moſt for their advantage, and his glory. When the Saints therefore do pray with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, it doth not argue that they are to doubt or queſtion God's love and kindneſs to them: But becauſe they at all

time

times are not so wise, but that sometimes Satan may get that advantage of them, as to tempt them to pray for that, which if they had it, would neither prove to God's glory, nor his Peoples good. 1 *Joh.* 5. 14, 15. *Yet this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us: And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petition that we ask of him*; that is, we asking in the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. For, as I said before, that Petition that is not put up in and through the Spirit, it is not to be answered, because it is beside the Will of God. For the Spirit only knoweth that, and so consequently knoweth how to pray according to that will of God. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. But more of this hereafter.

Thus you see, First, what Prayer is. Now to proceed.

II. *I will pray with the Spirit.*

Now to pray with the Spirit, for that's the praying Man, and none elſe, ſo as to be accepted of God: It is for a man (as aforeſaid) ſincerely and ſenſibly, with affection to come to God through Chriſt, *&c.* Which ſincere, ſenſible and affectionate coming, muſt be by the working of God's Spirit.

There is no Man nor Church in the World, that can come to God in Prayer, but by the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit: *For* (Eph. 2. 18.) *through Chriſt we all have acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father.* Wherefore *Paul* ſaith, *We know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that ſearcheth the heart, knoweth the meaning of the ſpirit; becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the Saints according to the will of God.* And becauſe there is in this Scripture ſo full a diſcovery of the Spirit of Prayer, and of Man's

Man's inability to pray without it; therefore I shall in a few words comment upon it.

Rom. 15. 16. *For we.*] Consider, first, the Person speaking, even *Paul*; and in his Person, all the Apostles. We Apostles, we extraordinary Officers, the wise Master-Builders, that have some of us been caught up into Paradise, 1 *Cor.* 3. 10. 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. *We know not what we should pray for.*

Surely, there is no Man but will confess, that *Paul* and his Companions were as able to have done any work for God, as any *Pope* or proud *Prelate* in the Church of *Rome*, and could as well have made a * *Common-Prayer-Book*, as those who at first composed this; as being not a whit behind them, either in Grace or Gifts.

* *See M.* Fox's Acts and Monuments, *Volume* 2.

For we know not what we should pray for.] We know not the Matter of the things for which we should pray, neither the *Object* to whom we pray, nor

the *Medium*, by or through whom we pray; none of these things know we, but by the help and assistance of the Spirit, *Mat.* 11. 27. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10, 11. Should we pray for Communion with God, through Christ? Should we pray for Faith, for Justification by Grace, and a truly sanctified Heart? None of these things know we. For, *As no man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man that is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. But here (alas!) the Apostle speaks of inward and spiritual things, which the world knows not, *Isa.* 29. 11.

Again, As they know not the *Matter*, &c. of Prayer, without the help of the Spirit; so neither know they the *Manner* thereof without the same: And therefore he addeth, *We know not what we should pray for as we ought*; but, *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered.* Mark here, they could not so well and so fully come off in the manner of performing

forming this Duty, as these in our days think they can.

The Apostles, when they were at the best; yea when the Holy Ghost assisted them, yet then they were fain to come off with sighs and groans; falling short of expressing their mind, but with *sighs* and *groans*, which *cannot be uttered*.

But here now the wise Men of our days are so well skill'd, as that they have both the *Manner* and *Matter* of their Prayers at their fingers ends; setting such a Prayer for such a day, and that twenty years before it comes: One for *Christmas*, another for *Easter*, and six days after that. They have also bounded how many Syllables must be said in every one of them at their Publick Exercises. For each Saints Day also, they have them ready for the Generations yet unborn to say. They can tell you also when you shall kneel, when you shall stand, when you should abide in your Seats, when you should go up into the Chancel, and what you should do when you come

there. All which the Apoſtles came ſhort of, as not being able to compoſe ſo profound a manner. And that for this reaſon included in this Scripture, becauſe the fear of God tied them to pray *as they ought.*

For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought.] Mark this, *As we ought.* For the not thinking of this word, or at leaſt the not underſtanding it, in the ſpirit and truth of it, hath occaſioned theſe Men to deviſe, as *Jeroboam* did (1 *Kings* 12. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.) another way of Worſhip, both for *Matter* and *Manner*, than is revealed in the Word of God. But ſaith *Paul, We muſt pray as we ought*: And this we cannot do by all the art, skill, and cunning device of Men or Angels. *For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit.* Nay, further, it muſt be *the Spirit it ſelf* that helpeth our Infirmities; not the Spirit, and Man's Luſts. What Man of his own brain may imagine and deviſe, is one thing; and what they are commanded

manded and ought to do, is another. *Many ask and have not, because they ask amiss*, Jam. 4. 3. And so are never the nearer the enjoying of those things they petition for. It is not to pray at random, that will put off God, or cause him to answer.

While Prayer is making, God is searching the heart, to see from what root and spirit it doth arise. *And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth* (that is, approveth only) *the meaning of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God*, 1 *John* 5. 14. For in that which is according to his Will only he heareth us, and in nothing else. And it is the Spirit only that can teach us so to ask; it only being able to search out all things, *even the deep things of God*. Without which Spirit, though we had a thousand *Common-Prayer-Books*, yet we know not what we should pray for as we ought, being accompanied with those infirmities that make us absolutely uncapable of such a work. Which infir-

infirmities, although it is a hard thing to name them all, yet ſome of them are theſe that follow.

Firſt, VVithout the Spirit, Man is ſo infirm, that he cannot with all other means whatſoever, be enabled to think one right ſaving Thought of God, of Chriſt, or of his bleſſed Things; and therefore he ſaith of the VVicked, *God is not in all their thoughts*, Pſal. 10. 4. Unleſs it be that they *imagine him altogether ſuch a one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 20. *For every imagination of the thought of their heart, is only evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21.

They then, not being able to conceive aright of God, to whom they pray; of Chriſt, through whom they pray; nor of the things for which they pray, as is before ſhewed, how ſhall they be able to addreſs themſelves to God, without the Spirit help this infirmity?

Peradventure you will ſay, By the help of the *Common-Prayer-Book*: But, that cannot do it, unleſs it can open the

the eyes, and reveal to the ſoul all theſe thing before touched. Which, that it cannot, it is evident; becauſe that is the work of the Spirit only: The Spirit it ſelf is the revealer of theſe things to poor ſouls, and that which doth give us to underſtand them; wherefore, Chriſt tells his Diſciples, when he promiſed to ſend the Spirit, the Comforter, *He ſhall take of mine, and ſhew unto you*; as if he had ſaid, I know you are naturally dark and ignorant, as to the underſtanding any of my things; though ye try this courſe and the other, yet your ignorance will ſtill remain; the veil is ſpread over your heart, and there is none can take away the ſame, nor give you ſpiritual underſtanding, *but the Spirit*. The *Common-Prayer Book* will not do it, neither can any man expect that it ſhould be inſtrumental that way, it being none of God's Ordinances; but a thing ſince the Scriptures were written, patched together, one piece at one time, and another at another, a meer humane

mane invention and inſtitution, which God is ſo far from owning of, that he expreſly forbids it, with any other ſuch like, and that by manifold ſayings in his moſt holy and bleſſed Word. See *Mark* 7. *verſ.* 7, 8. and *Col.* 2. *verſ.* 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. *Deut* 12. 30, 31, 32. *Prov.* 30. 6 *Deut.* 4. 2. *Rev.* 22. 18. For right Prayer, muſt as well in the outward part of it in the outward expreſſion, as in the inward intention, come from what the ſoul doth apprehend in the light of the Spirit; otherwiſe it is condemned as vain and an abomination; (*Mark.* 7.) becauſe the heart and tongue do not go along jointly in the ſame, *Prov.* 21. 9. *Iſa.* 29. 13. neither indeed can they, unleſs the Spirit help our infirmities. And this *David* knew full well, which did made him cry, *Lord open thou my lips and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe*, Pſal. 51. 10, 11.

I ſuppoſe, there is none can imagine but that *David* could ſpeak and expreſs himſelf as well as others, nay, as any in

in our generation, as is clearly manifeſted by his word, and his works. Nevertheleſs, when this good man, this Prophet, comes into God's Worſhip, then the Lord muſt help, or he can do nothing; *Lord open thou my lips, and then my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.* He could not ſpeak one right word, except the Spirit it ſelf gave utterance: *For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it ſelf helpeth our infirmities.*

But *Secondly*, It muſt be a praying with the Spirit, that is the effectual praying; becauſe, without that, as men are ſenceleſs, ſo hypocritical, cold, and unſeemly in their prayers; and ſo, they with their prayers, are both rendred abominable to God, *Mat.* 23. 14. *Mark* 12. 40. It is not the excellency of the voice, nor the ſeeming affection, and earneſtneſs of him that prayeth, that is any thing regarded of God without it, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. *Iſa.* 58. 2. 3. For man as man, is ſo full of all manner of wickedneſs, that he cannot keep a word,

or thought, so *much less a piece of prayer clean*, and *acceptable to God through Christ*. And for this cause, the Pharisees, with their prayers, were rejected. No question, but they were excellently able to express themselves in words, and also for length of time too they were very notable; but they had not the Spirit of Jesus Christ to help them, and therefore they did what they did with their infirmities or weaknesses only, and so fell short of a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of their souls to God through the strength of the Spirit. That is the prayer that goeth to Heaven, that is sent thither in the strength of the Spirit. For,

Thirdly, Nothing but the Spirit can shew a man clearly his misery by nature, and so put a man into a posture of prayer. Talk is but talk, as we use to say, and so it is but mouth-worship, if there be not a sence of misery, and that effectually too.

O the cursed hypocrisie that is in most hearts, and that accompanieth many thou-

thouſands of praying men that would be ſo looked upon in this day, and all for want of a ſence of their miſery! But now the Spirit, that will ſweetly ſhew the ſoul its miſery, where it is, and what is like to become of it; alſo the intolerableneſs of that condition: For it is the Spirit that doth effectually *convince of ſin and miſery, without the Lord Jeſus*, John 16. 7, 8, 9. and ſo puts the ſoul into a ſweet, ſerious, ſenſible, affectionate way of praying to God according to his Word.

Fourthly, If men did ſee their ſins, yet without the help of the Spirit, they would not pray: for they would run away from God, with *Cain* and *Judas*, and utterly deſpair of mercy, were it not for the Spirit. When a man is indeed ſenſible of his ſin and God's curſe, then it is an hard thing to perſuade him to pray; for ſaith his heart, *There is no hope, it is in vain to ſeek God*, Jer. 2. 25. Jer. 28. 12. I am ſo vile, ſo wretched, and ſo curſed a creature, that I ſhall never be regarded. Now here comes

comes the Spirit, and ſtayeth the ſoul, helpeth it to hold up its face to God, by letting into the heart ſome ſmall ſence of mercy, to encourage it to go to God; and hence it is called the *Comforter*, John 14. 26.

Fifthly, It muſt be in, or with the Spirit; For without that, no man can know how he ſhould come to God the right way. Men may eaſily ſay, they come to God in his Son: but it is the hardeſt thing of a thouſand to come to God aright, and in his own way, without the Spirit. *It is the ſpirit that ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. It is the Spirit that muſt ſhew us the way of coming to God, and alſo what there is in God that makes him deſirable. *I beſeech thee* (ſaith *Moſes*) *ſhew me thy way that I may know thee*, Exod. 33. 13. and John 16. 14. *He ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

Sixthly, Becauſe without the Spirit, though a man did ſee his miſery, and alſo the way to come to God; yet he would

would never be able to claim a ſhare in either God, Chriſt, or Mercy, with Gods approbation. O how great a task is it. for a poor ſoul that becomes ſenſible of ſin, and the wrath of God, to ſay in Faith, but this one word, *Father!* I tell you, however hypocrites think, yet the Chriſtian, that is ſo indeed, finds all the difficulty in this very thing, it cannot ſay, God is its *Father*.

Oh! ſaith he, I dare not call him Father; and hence it is that the Spirit muſt be ſent into the hearts of God's people for this very thing, to cry, *Father*, Gal. 4. 6. it being too great a work for any man to do *knowingly*, and *believingly*, without it. When I ſay, *knowingly*, I mean, knowing what it is to be a Child of God, and to be born again. And when I ſay, *believingly*, I mean for the ſoul to believe, and that from good experience, that the work of Grace is wrought in him: this is the right calling of God *Father*; and not, as many do, to ſay in a babling way, the Lord's Prayer (ſo called) by heart, as it lyeth

lyeth in the words of the Book. No, here is the life of Prayer, when in, or with the Spirit, a man being made ſenſible of ſin, and how to come to the Lord for mercy; he comes, I ſay, in the ſtrength of the Spirit, and cryeth, *Father.*

That one word ſpoken in Faith, is better than a thouſand prayers, as men call them, written and read in a formal, cold, luke-warm way.

Oh how far ſhort are thoſe people of being ſenſible of this, who count it enough to teach themſelves, and children, to ſay the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, with other ſayings; when as God knows they are ſenceleſs of themſelves, their miſery, or what it is to be brought to God through Chriſt!

Ah poor ſouls! ſtudy your miſery, and cry to God to ſhew you your confuſed blindneſs and ignorance, before you be ſo rife in calling God your Father, or learning your children either ſo to ſay. And know, that to ſay, God is your Father, in a way of prayer,

er, or conference, without any experiment of the work of grace on your ſouls, it is to ſay, you are *Jews*, and are not, and ſo to lie.

You ſay, *Our Father*: God ſaith, you blaſpheme, You ſay, you are *Jews*, that is, true Chriſtians: God ſaith, you lie. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. And I know the blaſphemy of them that ſay, they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan*, Rev. 3. 9. Rev. 2. 9.

And ſo much the greater the ſin is, by how much the more the ſinner boaſts it with a pretended ſanctity, as the *Jews* did to Chriſt, in *Joh.* 8. 41, to 45. which made Chriſt even in plain terms to tell them their doom, for all their hypocritical pretences. And yet forſooth, every curſed whoremaſter, thief and drunkard, ſwearer, and perjured perſon; they that have not only been ſuch in times paſt, but are even ſo ſtill; theſe, I ſay, by ſome muſt be counted the only honeſt men, and all becauſe,

with

with their blaſphemous throats and hypocritical hearts, they will come to Church and ſay, *Our Father*. Nay further, theſe men though every time they ſay to God, *Our Father*, do moſt abominably blaſpheme, yet they muſt be compelled thus to do. And becauſe others that are of more ſober Principles, ſcruple the truth of ſuch vain Traditions; therefore they muſt be looked upon to be the only Enemies of God and the Nation, *Iſa.* 53, 10. when as it is their own curſed Superſtition that doth ſet the great God againſt them, and cauſe him to count them for his enemies. And yet juſt like to *Bonner* that blood-red *Perſecutor*, they commend (I ſay) theſe wretches although never ſo vile (if they cloſe in with their Traditions) to be good Churchmen, the honeſt ſubjects; while God's People are (as it hath always been, *Ezra* 4. 12, to 16.) looked upon to be a turbulent, ſeditious, and factious people.

Therefore give me leave a little to reaſon

reaſon with thee, thou poor, blind, ignorant Sot; It may be, thy great prayer is to ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* Doſt thou know the meaning of the very firſt words of this Prayer? Canſt thou indeed, with the reſt of the Saints, cry *Our Father*? Art thou truly born again? haſt thou received the Spirit of Adoption? doſt thou ſee thy ſelf in Chriſt? and canſt thou come to God as a Member of him? Or, art thou ignorant of theſe things, and yet dareſt ſay, *Our Father*? Is not the Devil thy Father (*John* 8. 44) and doſt thou not do the deeds of the fleſh? and yet dareſt thou ſay to God, *Our Father!* Nay, art thou not a deſperate Perſecutor of the Children of God? haſt thou not curſed them in thy heart many a time? And yet doſt thou out of thy blaſphemous throat ſuffer theſe words to come, even, *Our Father*?

He is their Father, whom thou hateſt and perſecuteſt.

But as the Devil preſented himſelf amongſt the Sons of God, *Job.* 1. when they

they were to present themselves before the Father, even our Father; so is it now: because the Saints are commanded to say, *Our Father*; therefore all the blind ignorant rabble in the world, they must also use the same words, *Our Father*.

Secondly, And dost thou indeed say, *Hallowed be thy Name*, with thy heart? Dost thou study by all honest and lawful ways, to advance the Name, Holiness and Majesty of God? Doth thy heart and conversation agree with this passage? Dost thou strive to imitate Christ in all thy works of Righteousness, which God hath commanded of thee, and prompt thee forwards to? It is so, if thou beest one that canst truly with God's allowance cry, *Our Father*.

Or, is it not the least of thy thoughts all the day? and dost thou not clearly make it appear that thou art a cursed Hypocrite, by condemning that with thy daily practice, which thou pretendest in thy praying with thy dissembling tongue?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Wouldeſt thou have the *Kingdom of God come indeed*, and alſo his Will to be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven? Nay, notwithſtanding thou, according to the Form, ſay'ſt, *Thy Kingdom come*; yet, would it not make thee ready to run mad, to hear the Trumpet ſound, to ſee the Dead ariſe, and thy ſelf juſt now to go and appear before God, to reckon for all the Deeds thou haſt done in the Body? Nay, are not the very Thoughts of it altogether diſpleaſing to thee? And if God's Will ſhould be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven, muſt it not be thy ruine?

There is never a Rebel in Heaven againſt God; and if he ſhould ſo deal on Earth, muſt he not whirl thee down to Hell?

And ſo of the reſt of the Petitions.

Ah! how ſadly would even thoſe Men look, and with what terror would they walk up and down the World, if they did but know the lying and blaſ-

pheming that proceedeth out of their mouth, even in their most pretended sanctity?

The Lord awaken you, and learn your poor Souls, in all humility, to take heed that you be not rash and unadvised with your Heart, and much more with your Mouth; when you appear before God, (as the wise Man saith,) *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing*; especially to call God *Father*, without some blessed Experience, when thou comest before God. But I pass this.

Seventhly, It must be a Praying with the Spirit, if it be accepted; because there is nothing but the Spirit can lift up the Soul or Heart to God in Prayer. *The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord*, *Prov.* 16. 1. That is, In every work for God, (and especially in Prayer,) if the heart run with the tongue, it must be prepared by the Spirit of God.

Indeed, the Tongue is very apt (of itself)

ſelf) to run without either Fear or Wiſdom. But when it is the anſwer of the heart, and that ſuch an heart as is prepared by the Spirit of God; then it ſpeaks ſo as God commands, and doth deſire.

They are mighty words of *David*, where he ſaith, *That he lifteth his heart and his ſoul to God*, Pſal. 25. 1.

It is a great work for any man without the ſtrength of the ſpirit; and therefore I conceive that this is one of the great Reaſons why the Spirit of God is called a Spirit of *Supplication*, *Zech.* 12. 11. becauſe it is that which helpeth the heart, when it ſupplicates indeed, to do it.

And therefore ſaith *Paul*, Eph. 6. 18. ---*Praying with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit.* And ſo in my Text, *I will pray with the Spirit.*

Prayer, without the heart be in it, is like a ſound without Life; and a heart, without it be lifted up of the ſpirit, will never pray to God.

Eighthly, As the heart muſt be lift-

ed up by the Spirit, if it pray aright; so also it must be held up by the Spirit when it is up, if it continue to pray aright.

I do not know what, or how it is with other hearts, whether they be lifted up by the Spirit of God, and so continued, or no: But this I am sure of;

First, That it is impossible that all the Prayer-Books that men have made in the World, should lift up or prepare the heart; that is the work of the great God himself.

And in the *Second* place, I am sure, that they are as far from keeping it up, when it is up.

And indeed here is the Life of Prayer, to have the heart kept with God in the duty.

Exod. 17. 12. It was a great matter for *Moses* to keep his *Hands* lifted up to God in Prayer; but how much more than to keep the heart in it!

The want of this, is that which God complains of, *Ezek.* 33. *That they draw nigh*

nigh to him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him, (but chiefly) *they that walk after the Commandments and Traditions of men:* as the ſcope of *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. doth teſtifie.

And verily, may I but ſpeak my own Experience, and from that tell you the difficulty of Praying to God as I ought; it is enough to make your poor, blind, carnal men, to entertain ſtrange Thoughts of me. For, as for my heart, when I go to pray, I find it ſo loth to go to God; and when it is with him, ſo loth to ſtay with him, that many times I am forced in my Prayers; *firſt*, to beg of God, that he would take mine heart, and ſet it on himſelf in Chriſt; and when it is there, that he would keep it there, (*Pſal.* 86. 11.) Nay, many times I know not what to pray for, I am ſo blind; nor how to pray, I am ſo ignorant; only (bleſſed be Grace) the *Spirit helps our infirmities.*

Oh the ſtarting-holes that the heart hath in the time of Prayer! none

knows how many by-ways the heart hath, and back-lanes, to slip away from the presence of God. How much Pride also, if enabled with Expressions? How much Hypocrisie, if before others? And how little Conscience is there made of Prayer between God and the Soul in secret, unless the *Spirit of Supplication* be there to help?

When the Spirit gets into the Heart, then there is Prayer indeed, and not till then.

Ninthly. The Soul that doth rightly pray, it must be in and with the help and strength of the Spirit; because it is impossible that a Man should express himself in Prayer without it. When I say it is impossible for a man to express himself in Prayer without it; I mean, that it is impossible that the heart, in a sincere and sensible affectionate way, should pour out it self before God, with those groans and sighs that come from a truly praying Heart, without the assistance of the Spirit. It is not the Mouth that is the main thing to be

looked

looked at in Prayer, whether the heart be so full of affection and earnestness in Prayer with God, that it is impossible to express their sence and desire. For then a man desires indeed, when his desires are so strong, many and mighty, that all the words, tears and groans that can come from the heart, cannot utter them. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.*

That is but poor Prayer, which is only discovered in so many words.

A man that truly prays one Prayer, shall after that never be able to express with his Mouth or Pen, the unutterable desires, sence, affection and longing, that went to God in that Prayer.

The best Prayers have often more Groans than Words; and those Words that it hath, are but a lean and shallow representation of the Heart, Life and Spirit of that Prayer. You do not find any words of Prayer that we read of, come out of the Mouth of *Moses*,

when he was going out of *Egypt*, and was followed by *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 14. 15. and yet he made Heaven ring again with his Cry: But it was the unexpressible, and unsearchable groans and cryings of his Soul, in and with the Spirit.

God is the *God of Spirits*, Numb. 16. 22. and his Eyes look farther than the out-side of any Duty whatsoever, 1 *Sam.* 16. 7.

I doubt this is but little thought on by the most of them that would be looked upon as a praying People.

The nearer a man comes in any work that God commands him, to the doing of it according to his Will; so much the more hard and difficult it is. And the reason is, because Man, as Man, is not able to do it.

But Prayer (as aforesaid) is not only a Duty, but one of the most eminent Duties; and therefore so much the more difficult. Therefore *Paul* knew what he said, when he said, *I will pray with the Spirit.* He knew well, it was

not

not what others writ or said, that could make him a praying Person; nothing less than the Spirit could do it.

Tenthly, It must be with the Spirit; or else, as there will be a failing in the act it self, so there will be a failing, yea, a fainting, in the prosecution of the work. *Prayer* is an Ordinance of God, that must continue with a Soul, so long as it is on this side glory.

But, as I said before, it is not possible for a Man to get up his Heart to God in Prayer; so it is as difficult to keep it there, without the assistance of the Spirit.

And if so, then for a Man to continue from time to time in Prayer with God, it must of necessity be with the Spirit.

Christ tells us, That *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1, 2. And again tells us, that this is one Definition of an Hypocrite, That either *he will no continue in Prayer*, or else, if he do, it will *not be in the power*

(*Job* 27. 10.) That is, in the Spirit of Prayer, but in the Form, *for a pretence only*, Mat. 23. 14.

It is the easiest thing of a hundred, to fall from the Power to the Form; but it is the hardest thing of many, to keep in the Life, Spirit and Power of any one Duty, especially Prayer: That is such a work, that a Man, without the help of the Spirit, cannot so much as pray once; much less, continue without it in a sweet praying frame; and in praying, so to pray, as to have his Prayers to ascend into the Ears of the Lord God of Sabboth.

Jacob did not only *begin*, but *held* it; *I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me*, Gen. 32.

So did the rest of the Godly, *Hos.* 12. 4. But this could not be without the Spirit of Prayer: *It is through the Spi-* [illegible] *hat we have access to the Father*, [illegible] 8.

[illegible] e is a remarkable place in [illegible] he stirreth up the Saints, [illegible] ment of God upon the Wicked,

Wicked to ſtand faſt, and continue or hold out in the Faith of the Goſpel, as one excellent Means thereto, without which he knew they would *never* be able to do it. Saith he, *Build up your ſelves in your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt*, Jude 20. As if he had ſaid, *Brethren, as eternal life is laid up for the perſons that hold out only; ſo you cannot hold out, unleſs you continue praying in the Spirit.*

The great cheat that the Devil and Antichriſt deludes the world withal, it is to make them continue in the Form of any Duty, the Form of Preaching, of Hearing, of Praying, *&c. Theſe are they that have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the power; from ſuch turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Here followeth the Third Thing; to wit,

What it is to pray with the Spirit, and with Understanding.

AND now to the next thing, What it is *to pray with the Spirit*, and *to pray with the Understanding also*. For the Apostle put a clear distinction between *praying with the Spirit*, and *praying with the Spirit and Understanding*. Therefore when he saith, he *will pray with the Spirit*; he addeth, *and I will pray with the Understanding* [*also.*] This Distinction was occasioned through the *Corinthians* not observing that it was their Duty to do what they did to the Edification of themselves, and others too; whereas they did it for their own Commendations. So I judge: For many of them having extraordinary Gifts, *as to speak with divers tongues*, &c. therefore they were

were more for thoſe mighty gifts, than they were for the edifying of their Brethren; which was the cauſe that *Paul* wrote this Chapter to them, to let them underſtand, that though extraordinary gifts were excellent, yet, to do what they did to the edification of the Church, was more excellent. *For* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *if I pray in an unknown tongue, my Spirit prayeth, but my Underſtanding* (and alſo the Underſtanding of others) *is unfruitful.* Therefore, *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo,* 1 Cor. 14. 4, 5,--12, 13, 14, 15, *&c.* read the ſcope of the whole Chapter.

It is expedient then that the *Underſtanding* ſhould be occupied in Prayer, as well as the heart and mouth; *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo.* That which is done with Underſtanding, is done more effectually, ſenſibly and heartily, (as I ſhall further ſhew anon) than that which is done without it. Which made the Apoſtle pray for the *Coloſſians, That*

God

God would fill them with the knowledge of his Will, in all wiſdom, and ſpiritual underſtanding, Col. 1. 9. And for the *Epheſians*, *That God would give unto them the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him*, Eph. 1. 17. And ſo for the *Philippians*, *That God would make them abound in knowledge and in all judgment*, Phil. 1. 9.

A ſuitable underſtanding is good in every thing a man undertakes, either Civil or Spiritual; and therefore it muſt be deſired by all them that would be a praying People.

In my ſpeaking to this, I ſhall ſhew you what it is to pray with Underſtanding.

Underſtanding is to be taken both for ſpeaking in our *Mother-Tongue*, and alſo *Experimentally*.

I ſhall paſs the firſt and treat only on the ſecond.

For the making of right Prayers, it is to be required, that there ſhould be a good or ſpiritual underſtanding in all them who pray to God.

Firſt,

First, To pray with understanding, *is to pray as being instructed by the Spirit, in the understanding of the want of those things which the Soul is to pray for.*

Though a man be in never so much need of pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come, yet if he understand not this, he will either not desire them at all, or else be so cold and luke-warm in his desires after them, that God will even loath their frame of spirit in asking for them. Thus it was with the Church of the *Laodiceans*, they wanted knowledge or spiritual understanding; They knew not that they were *poor, wretched, blind and naked*: The cause whereof, made them, and all their services, so loathsom to Christ, that he threatens *to spue them out of his mouth*, Rev. 3. 17.

Men without understanding, may say the same words in prayer as others do, but if there be an understanding in the one, and none in the other; there is, Oh there is a mighty difference in speaking the very same words! The

one

one ſpeaking it from a ſpiritual underſtanding of thoſe things, that he in words deſires; and the other words it only, and there is all.

Secondly, Spiritual underſtanding, *eſpieth in the heart of God, a readineſs and willingneſs to give thoſe things to the ſoul, that it ſtands in need of.*

David by this, could gueſs at the very *thoughts* of God towards him, *Pſal.* 40. 5.

And thus it was with the woman of *Canaan* (*Mat.* 15. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.) ſhe did by Faith and a right Underſtanding, diſcern (beyond all the rough carriage of Chriſt) tenderneſs and willingneſs in his heart to ſave, which cauſed her to be vehement and earneſt, yea, reſtleſs, until ſhe did enjoy the mercy ſhe ſtood in need of.

An underſtanding of the willingneſs that is in the heart of God to ſave ſinners, there is nothing will preſs the ſoul more to ſeek after God, and to cry for pardon, than it. If a man ſhould

ſee

ſee a Pearl, worth an hundred pounds, lye in a ditch, yet if he underſtood not the value of it, he would lightly paſs it by; but if he once get the knowledge of it, he would venture up to the neck for it.

So it is with ſouls concerning the things of God; If a man once get an underſtanding of the worth of them, then his heart, nay the very ſtrength of his ſoul, runs after them, and he will never leave crying till he have them.

The two blind men in the Goſpel, becauſe they did certainly know that Jeſus, who was going by them, was both able and willing to heal ſuch infirmities as they were afflicted with, therefore they cryed, *and the more they were rebuked, the more they cryed*, Mat. 20. 29, 30, 31.

Thirdly, The underſtanding being ſpiritually enlightned *hereby, there is the way* (as aforeſaid) *diſcovered through which the ſoul ſhould come unto God*; which gives great encouragement unto it.

It is elſe with a poor ſoul, as with one who hath a work to do, and if it be not done, the danger is great; if it be done, ſo is the advantage: but he knows not how to begin, nor how to proceed, and ſo through diſcouragement, lets all alone, and runs the hazard.

Fourthly, The enlightned underſtanding, *ſees largeneſs enough in the Promiſes to encourage it to pray*, which ſtill adds to it ſtrength to ſtrength. As when men promiſe ſuch and ſuch things to all that will come for them, it is great encouragement to thoſe that know what promiſes are made, to come and ask for them.

Fifthly, The Underſtanding being enlightned, *way is made for the ſoul to come to God with ſuitable arguments.*

Sometimes in a way of expoſtulation, as *Jacob. Gen.* 37. 9. Sometimes in way of ſupplication, yet not in a verbal way only, but even from the heart there is forced by the Spirit, through the underſtanding, ſuch effectual Arguments, as moveth the heart of God.

When

When *Ephraim* gets a right understanding of his own unseemly carriages towards the Lord, then he begins to *bemoan himself*, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. and in bemoaning of himself, he useth such Arguments with the Lord, that it affects his heart, draws out forgiveness, and makes *Ephraim* pleasant in his eyes through Jesus Christ our Lord. *I have surely heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himself thus* (saith God) *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoak: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned, I repented, and after I was instructed* (or had a right understanding of my self) *I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*

These be *Ephraim*'s complaints, and bemoanings of himself; at which the Lord breaks forth into these heart-melting expressions, saying,

Is Ephraim *my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I speak unto him,*

I do

I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.

Thus you ſee, that as it is required to pray with the Spirit, ſo it is to pray with the Underſtanding alſo.

And to illuſtrate what hath been ſpoken by a Similitude:

Set the caſe there ſhould come two a begging to your door, the one is a poor, lame, wounded, and almoſt ſtarved creature; the other is a healthful luſty perſon.

Theſe two uſe the ſame words in their begging, the one ſaith he is almoſt ſtarved, ſo doth the other; but yet the man that is indeed the poor, lame, or maimed perſon, he ſpeaks with more ſence, feeling, and underſtanding of the miſery that is mentioned in their begging than the other can do; and it is diſcovered more by his affectionate ſpeaking, his bemoaning himſelf: His pain and poverty makes him ſpeak more in a ſpirit of Lamentation than

than the other, and he ſhall be pittied ſooner than the other, by all thoſe that have the leaſt dram of natural affection or pity.

Juſt thus it is with God.

There are ſome who out of cuſtom and formality, go and pray; there are others, who go in the bitterneſs of their ſpirit: The one he prays out of bare notion, and naked knowledge; the other hath his words forced from him by the anguiſh of his ſoul. Surely, that is the man that God will look at, even *him that is of a humble and contrite ſpirit, and that trembleth at his word*, Iſa. 66. 2.

Sixthly, An underſtanding well enlightned, is of admirable uſe alſo; *both as to the matter and manner of Prayer.*

He that hath his underſtanding well exerciſed, to diſcern between good and evil, and in it placed a ſence, either of the miſery of man, or the mercy of God; that ſoul hath no need of the Writings of other men, to teach him

by

by Forms of Prayer: For as he that feels the pain, needs not to be learned to cry, *Oh!* Even so, he that hath his Understanding opened by the Spirit, needs not so to be taught of other mens prayers, as that he cannot pray without them: the present sence, feeling, and pressure that lyeth upon his spirit, provokes him to groan out his requests unto the Lord.

When *David* had the pains of hell catching hold on him, and the sorrows of hell compassing him about, he needed not a *Bishop in a Surplice*, to learn him to say, *O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul*, Psal. 116. 3, 4. Or to look in a Book to teach him in a Form to pour out his heart before God.

It is the nature of the heart of sick men, in their pain and sickness, to vent it self for ease, by dolorous groans and complaints to them that stand by.

Thus it was with *David*, in *Psal.* 38. to the 12. *verse*. And thus, blessed be the Lord! it is with them that are indued with the Grace of God.

Seventh

Seventhly, It is neceſſary that there be an enlightned underſtanding, to the end that the Soul be kept in a continuation of the Duty of Prayer.

The People of God are not ignorant how many wiles, tricks, and temptations the Devil hath to make a poor ſoul, who is truly willing to have the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that upon Chriſt's terms too; I ſay, to tempt that ſoul to be weary of ſeeking the face of God, and to think that God is not willing to have mercy on ſuch a one as him. I, ſaith Satan, thou mayeſt pray indeed, but thou ſhalt not prevail. Thou ſeeſt thine heart is hard, cold, dull and dead, thou doſt not pray with the Spirit, thou doſt not pray in good earneſt, thy thoughts are running after other things, when thou pretendeſt to pray to God. Away hypocrite, go no further, it is but in vain to ſtrive any longer.

Here now, if the ſoul be not well informed in its underſtanding, it will preſently cry out, *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*,

Iſa.

Isa. 45. 27. Whereas the soul rightly informed and enlightned, saith; *Well, I will seek the Lord, and wait; I will not leave off, though the Lord keep silence, and speak not one word of comfort*, Isa. 49. 14.

He loved *Jacob* dearly, and yet he made him wrestle before he had the blessing, *Gen.* 32. 25, 26, 27.

Seeming delays in God are no tokens of his displeasure; he may hide his face from his dearest Saints, *Isa.* 8. 17, He loves to keep his People praying, and to find them ever knockin at the Gate of Heaven: It may be, says the soul, the Lord tries me, or he loves to hear me groan out my condition before him.

The Woman of *Canaan* would not take seeming denials for real ones; she knew the Lord was gracious, *Luke* 18. 1. to 6. And the Lord will avenge his People, though he bear long with them. The Lord hath waited longer upon me, than I have waited on him: And thus it was with *David*, *I*

waited patiently, saith he: That is, It was long before the Lord answered me, though at the last, *he enclined his ear unto me, and heard my cry*, Psal. 40. 1.

And the most excellent remedy for this, is an Understanding well informed and enlightned.

Alas, how many poor Souls are there in the World, that truly fear the Lord; who, because they are not well informed in their Understanding, are oft ready to give up all for lost, upon almost every trick and temptation of Satan! The Lord pity them, and help them to pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

Much of mine own Experience could I here discover. When I have been in my fits of Agony of Spirit, I have been strongly perswaded to leave off, and to seek the Lord no longer; but being made to understand, what great Sinners the Lord hath had mercy upon; and how large his Promises were still to Sinners; and that it was not the whole, but the Sick; not the Righteous, but the

Sinner; not the Full, but the Empty, that he extended his Grace and Mercy unto.

This made me, through the assistance of his holy Spirit, to cleave to him, to hang upon him, and yet to cry, though for the present he made no answer; and the Lord help all his poor tempted and afflicted People to do the like, and to continue, though it be long, according to the Saying of the Prophet, *Hab.* 2. 3. And to help them (to that end) to pray, not by the Inventions of Men, and their stinted Forms; but with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

And now to Answer a Query or two, and so to pass on to the next thing.

Query 1.

But what would you have us poor Creatures to do, that cannot tell how to pray? The Lord knows, I know not either how to pray, or what to pray for?

Answer.

Answer.

Poor heart! Thou can'ſt not (thou complaineſt) pray. Can'ſt thou ſee thy miſery? Hath God ſhewed thee that thou art by nature under the Curſe of his Law? If ſo, do not miſtake, I know thou do'ſt groan, and that moſt bitterly. I am perſwaded, thou can'ſt ſcarcely be found doing any thing in thy Calling, but Prayer breaks from thy Heart, *Rom.* 8. 28. Have not thy groans gone up to Heaven, from every corner of thy houſe? I know 'tis thus. And ſo alſo, Doth thine own ſorrowful heart witneſs thy Tears, thy forgetfulneſs of thy Calling? *&c.* Is not thy heart ſo full of deſires after the things of another World, that many times thou doſt even forget the things of this World? Prithee read this Scripture, *Job.* 23. 12.

Query 2.

Yea, but when I go into ſecret, and in-

tend to pour out my soul before God, I can scarce say any thing at all.

Answer.

Ah sweet Soul! It is not thy Words, that God so much regards, as that he will not mind thee, except thou comest before him with some eloquent Oration: His Eye is on the brokenness of thine Heart, and that it is that makes the very Bowels of the Lord run over: *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, Psal. 51. 17.

2. The stopping of thy Words, may arise from over-much trouble in the Heart. *David* was so troubled sometimes, *that he could not speak*, Psal. 77. 3, 4. But this may comfort all such sorrowful hearts as thou art; that though thou can'st not, through the anguish of thy Spirit, speak much; yet the holy Spirit stirs up in thine heart groans and sighs, so much the more vehement: When the Mouth is hindred, yet the Spirit is not.

Moses

Moſes, as aforeſaid, made Heaven ring again with his Prayers, when (that we read of) not one word came out of his Mouth. But,

3. If thou wouldeſt more fully expreſs thy ſelf before the Lord; ſtudy,

Firſt, Thy filthy Eſtate.

Secondly, God's Promiſes.

Thirdly, The Heart of Chriſt.

VVhich thou mayeſt know or diſcern;

1. By his Condeſcention and Bloodſhed.

2. By the Mercy he hath extended to great Sinners formerly; and plead thine own vileneſs, by way of Bemoaning: Chriſt's Blood, by way of Expoſtulation; and in thy Prayers, let the Mercy that he hath extended to other great Sinners, together with his rich Promiſes of Grace, be much upon thy heart. Yet let me counſel thee:

1. Take heed that thou content not thy ſelf with VVords.

2. That thou do not think that God looks only at them neither: But,

3. However, whether thy words be few or many, let thine heart go with them; *And then shalt thou seek him, and find him, when thou shalt seek him with thy whole heart*, Jer. 29. 13.

Object. 1.

But though you have seemed to speak against any other way of praying, but by the Spirit; yet here you your self can give Directions how to pray.

Answ.

We ought to prompt one another forward to Prayer, though we ought not to make for each other Forms of Prayer.

To exhort to pray with Christian Direction, is one thing; and to make stinted Forms, for the tying up of the Spirit of God to them, is another thing.

The Apostle gives them no Form to pray withal, yet directs to Prayer, *Eph.* 6. 18. *Rom.* 15. 30, 31, 32.

Let

Let no man therefore conclude, that because we may with allowance give Instructions and Directions to pray; that therefore it is lawful to make for each other Forms of Prayer.

Object. 2.

But if we do not use Forms of Prayer, how shall we teach our Children to pray?

Answ.

My Judgment is, That Men go the wrong way to learn their Children to pray, in going about so soon to learn them any set company of words, as is the common use of poor Creatures to do.

For to me it seems to be a better way for People betimes to tell their Children what cursed Creatures they are, and how they are under the wrath of God, by reason of Original and Actual Sin: Also to tell them the Nature of God's Wrath, and the Duration of the

misery; which if they concientiously do, they would sooner learn their Children to pray than they do.

The way that Men learn to pray, it is by Conviction for sin; and this is the way to make our sweet Babes do so too. But the other way, namely, to be busie in learning Children Forms of Prayer, before they know any thing else, it is the next way to make them cursed Hypocrites, and to puff them up with Pride. Learn therefore your Children to know their wretched State and Condition; tell them of Hell-fire, and their Sins; of Damnation, and Salvation; the way to escape the one, and to enjoy the other, (if you know it your selves;) and this will make Tears run down your sweet Babes Eyes, and hearty Groans flow from their Hearts; and then also you may tell them to whom they should pray, and through whom they should pray; you may tell them also of God's Promises, and his forming Grace extended to Sinners, according to the Word..

Ah!

Ah! poor ſweet Babes, the Lord open their Eyes, and make them holy Chriſtians. Saith *David*, *Come ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord*, Pſalm 34. 11.

He doth not ſay, I will nuzzle you up in a Form of Prayer; but, *I will teach you the fear of the Lord*: Which is, to ſee their ſad States by Nature, and to be inſtructed in the Truth of the Goſpel, which doth through the Spirit beget Prayer in every one that in truth learns it: And the more you learn them this, the more will their hearts run out to God in Prayer.

God did never account *Paul* a praying Man, until he was a *convinced* and *converted man*, Acts 9. 11. No more will it be with any elſe.

Object. 3.

But we find that the Diſciples deſired that Chriſt would teach them to pray, as John alſo taught his Diſciples; and,

that thereupon he taught them that Form called the Lord's Prayer.

Answ.

First, To be taught by Christ, is that which not only *they*, but *we* desire; and seeing he is not here in his Person to teach us, the Lord teach us by his Word and Spirit; for the Spirit is it which he hath said he would send to supply in his room, when he went away; as it is, *John* 14. 16. & 16. 7.

Secondly, As to that called *a Form*, I cannot think that Christ intended it as a stinted Form of Prayer.

First, Because he himself layeth it down diversely; as it is to be seen, if you compare *Matth.* 6. with *Luke* 11. Whereas, if he intended it as a Set-Form, it must not have been so laid down; for a Set-Form, is so many words, and no more.

Secondly, We do not find that the Apostles did ever observe it as such, neither

neither did they admoniſh others ſo to do: Search all their Epiſtles; yet ſurely they, both for knowledge to diſcern, and faithfulneſs to practice, were as eminent as any He ever ſince in the VVorld, which would impoſe it.

But in a word; Chriſt by thoſe words, *Our Father*, &c. doth inſtruct his People what Rules they ſhould obſerve in their Prayers to God.

1. That they ſhould pray in Faith.
2. To God in the Heavens.
3. For ſuch things as are according to his VVill, &c. *Pray thus*; or, *after this manner.*

Object. 4.

But Chriſt bids, Pray for the Spirit: *This implieth, that Men without the Spirit may not withſtanding pray, and be heard*: See Luke 11. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Anſw.

Answ. 1. The Speech of Christ there is directed to his own, *vers.* 1.

2. Christ is telling of them, That God would give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, is to be understood of giving more of the holy Spirit; for still they are the Disciples spoken to, which had a measure of the Spirit already; for he saith, *When ye pray, say, Our Father*, &c. v. 2. *I say unto you*, v. 8. And *I say unto you*, v. 9. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Christians ought to pray for the Spirit; that is, for more of it, though God hath endued them with it already.

Quest.

Then would you have none pray, but those that know they are the Disciples of Christ?

Answ.

Anſ. Yes.

1. Let every ſoul that would be ſaved, pour out it ſelf to God, although it cannot, through temptation, conclude it ſelf a Child of God. And,

2. I know if the grace of God be in thee, it will be as natural to thee to groan out thy condition, as it is for a ſucking Child to cry for the breaſt.

Prayer is one of the firſt things that diſovereth a man to be a Chriſtian, *Acts* 9. 12. But yet if it be right, it is ſuch Prayer as followeth.

Firſt, To deſire God in Chriſt, for Himſelf, for his Holineſs, Love, Wiſdom and Glory. For right prayer, as it runs only to God through Chriſt, ſo it centers in him, and in him alone; *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none in Earth that I deſire* (long for, or ſeek after) *beſides thee* Pſal. 73. 25.

Sixth

Secondly, That the ſoul might enjoy continual Communion with him, both here and hereafter. *I ſhall be ſatisfied, when I awake, with thine Image, or in thy likeneſs*, Pſal. 17, 15. *For in thee we groan earneſtly*, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 2.

Thirdly, Right Prayer is accompanied with a continual labour after that which is prayed for. *My ſoul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning*, Pſal. 130. 6. *I will ariſe now and ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth*, Cant. 3. 2.

For mark, I beſeech you, there is two things that provoke to Prayer: One is, a deteſtation to ſin, and the things of this Life; The other is, a longing deſire after Communion with God, in an holy and undefiled ſtate and inheritance.

Compare but this one thing with moſt of the Prayers that are made men, and you ſhall find them but mock prayers, and the breathings of an abominable ſpirit; for even the moſt

moſt of men, either not pray at all, or elſe only endeavour to mock God and the World, by ſo doing: for, do but compare their prayer, and the courſe of their lives together, and you may eaſily ſee that the thing included in their prayer, is the leaſt looked after by their lives. Oh ſad Hypocrites!

Thus have I briefly ſhewed you,

1. What Prayer is.

2. What it is to pray with the Spirit.

3. What it is to pray with the Spirit, and with the Underſtanding alſo.

I ſhall now ſpeak a word or two of Application, and ſo conclude: with,

1. *A word of Information.*

2. *A word of Encouragement.*

3. *A word of Rebuke.*

Uſe.

USE. I.

A Word of Information.

For the first, to inform you, That as Prayer is the duty of every one of the Children of God, and carried on by the Spirit of Christ in the Soul: So every one that doth but offer to take upon him to pray to the Lord, had need be very wary, and go about that work *especially*, with the Dread of God, as well as with hopes of the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Prayer is an Ordinance of God, in which a man draws very near to God; and therefore it calleth for so much the more of the assistance of the Grace of God, to help a soul to pray, as becomes one that is in the presence of him.

It is a shame for a man to [illegible] himself irreverently before a K[illegible] but a sin to do so before God. And as a King

a King (if wiſe) is not pleaſed with an Oration made up with unſeemly words and geſtures; *So God takes no pleaſure in the ſacrifice of Fools*, Eccleſ. 5. 1, 4.

It is not long diſcourſes, nor eloquent tongues, that are the things which are pleaſing in the ears of the Lord; but *a humble, broken and contrite heart* (Pſal. 51. 17. *Iſa.* 57. 15.) that is ſweet in the noſtrils of the heavenly Majeſty.

Therefore for information, know, that there are theſe *Five Things* that are obſtructions to Prayer, and even make void the requeſts of the creature.

Firſt.

When men regard iniquity in their hearts, at the time of their Prayers before God. *If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* Pſal. 66. 18 For the preventing of temptation, that by the miſunderſtanding of this, may ſeize thy heart; when there is a ſecret love to that very

very thing, which thou with thy diſſembling lips doſt ask for ſtrength againſt. For this is the wickedneſs of man's heart, that it will even love, and hold faſt that, which with the mouth it prayeth againſt; and of this ſort are they, *that honour God with their mouth, but their heart is far from him*, Ezek. 33. 31.

Oh how ugly would it be in our eyes if we ſhould ſee a beggar ask an alms, with intention to throw it to the Dogs! Or, that ſhould ſay with one breath, pray you beſtow this upon me; and with the next I beſeech you give it me not. And yet thus it is with theſe kind of perſons; with their mouth they ſay *Thy will be done*; and with their hearts nothing less. With their mouth ſay, *Hallowed be thy Name*; and with their hearts and lives, they delight to diſhonour him all the day long.

These be the prayers that become ſin, *Pſal.* 109. 7, and though they put them up often, yet the Lord will never anſwer them, 2. *Sam.* 22. 42.

Secondly.

Secondly.

When men pray for a ſhew to be heard, and thought ſome body in Religion, and the like.

Theſe prayers alſo fall far ſhort of God's approbation, and are never like to be anſwered, in reference to eternal life.

There are two ſorts of men that pray to this end.

1. Your Trencher-Chaplains, that thruſt themſelves into great mens Families, pretending the Worſhip of God, when in truth the greateſt buſineſs is their own Bellies: which were notably painted out by *Ahab*'s Prophets, 1 *Kings* 18. 19. and alſo *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Wiſe men, *Dan.* 2. who though they pretended great devotion, yet their hearts and their bellies were the great things aimed at by them in all their pieces of devotion.

2. Them alſo that ſeek repute and applauſe for their eloquent Terms, and

ſeek

seek more to tickle the ears and heads of their hearers, than any thing else. These be they that *pray to be heard and seen of men, and have all their reward already*, Mat. 6. 5.

These persons are discovered thus.

1. They eye only their auditory in their expressions.

2. They look for commendations when they have done.

3. Their hearts either rise or fall according to their praise or enlargement.

4. The length of their Prayer pleaseth them; and that it might be long, they will vainly repeat things over and over, *Matth.* 6. 7. They study for enlargements, but look not from what heart they come. They look for returns, but it is the windy applause of men: and therefore they love not to be in a Chamber, but among company: and if at any time conscience thrusts them into their closet, yet hypocrisie will cause them to be heard in the streets;

ſtreets; and when their mouths have done going, their prayers are ended; for they wait not to *hearken what the Lord will ſay*, Pſal. 85. 8.

Thirdly.

A third ſort of Prayer that will not be accepted of God, it is, When either they pray for wrong things; or, if for right things, yet, that the thing prayed for might be ſpent upon their luſts, and laid out to wrong ends. *Some have not, becauſe they ask not*, ſaith James; *and others ask and have not, becauſe they ask amiſs, that they may conſume it upon their luſts*, Jam. 4. 2, 3, 4.

Ends contrary to God's Will, is a great Argument with God to fruſtrate the Petitions preſented before him. Hence it is, that ſo many pray for this and that, and yet receive it not; God anſwereth them only with ſilence, they have their words for their labour, and that is all.

Object.

Object.

But God heareth some persons; though their hearts be not right with him, as he did Israel, in giving Quails, *Psal.* 106. 14. *though they spent them upon their lusts.*

Answer.

If he doth, it is in Judgement, not in Mercy: He gave them their desire indeed, but they had better have been without it, for *he sent leanness into their souls*, Psal. 106. 15. Wo be to that man that God answereth thus.

Fourthly.

Another sort of prayers there are that are not answered, and those are such as are made by men, and presented to God in their own persons only, without their appearing in the Lord Jesus.

For,

For, though God hath appointed Prayer, and promiſed to hear the Prayer of the Creature; yet not the Prayer of any Creature that comes not in Chriſt. *If you ask any thing in my Name*, &c. Joh. 14. 13. And, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Col. 3. 17. *If ye ask any thing in my Name, I will do it*, Joh. 14. 14.

Though you be never ſo devout, zealous, earneſt, and conſtant in Prayer; yet it is in Chriſt only that you muſt be heard and accepted. But alas, the moſt of Men know not what it is to come to him in the Name of the Lord Jeſus! Which is the reaſon they either live wicked, pray wicked, and alſo die wicked. Or elſe,

2. That they attain to nothing elſe but what a mere natural Man may attain unto, as to be exact in Word and Deed betwixt Man and Man; and only with the Righteouſneſs of the Law to appear before God.

Fifthly,

Fifthly.

The laſt thing that hindreth Prayer, is, The *Form* of it without the *Power*. It is an eaſie thing for men to be very hot for ſuch things, as Forms of Prayer as they are written in a Book, but yet they are altogether forgetful to enquire with themſelves, whether they have the Spirit and Power of Prayer. Theſe men are like a painted man and their Prayers are like a falſe voice; they in perſon appear as Hypocrites, and their Prayers are an Abomination, *Prov.* 28. 9. When they ſay they have been pouring out their ſouls to God, he ſaith, they have been *howling like dogs*, Hoſ. 7. 14.

When therefore thou intendeſt, or art minded to pray to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, conſider theſe following Particulars.

1. Conſider ſeriouſly what thou wanteſt; do not as many, who in their words only beat the air, and ask for ſuch things as indeed they do not deſire,

ſire, nor ſee that they ſtand in need thereof.

2. When thou ſeeſt what thou wanteſt, keep to that, and take heed thou pray ſenſibly.

Object.

But I have a ſence of nothing; Then by your Argument, I muſt not pray at all.

Anſwer.

Firſt, If thou findeſt thy ſelf ſenſeleſs in ſome ſad meaſurre, yet thou canſt not complain of that ſenſleſneſs, but by being ſenſible.

There is a ſenſe of ſenſleſneſs, according to thy ſence then, that thou haſt of the need of any thing: ſo pray, (*Luke* 8. 9,) and if thou art ſenſible of thy ſenſleſneſs, pray the Lord to make thee ſenſible of what ever thou findeſt thine heart ſenſleſs of. This was the uſual practice of the holy men of God; *Lord make me to know mine*

end, saith *David*, Psal. 39. 4. *Lord, open to us this Parable*, said the Disciples, *Luke* 8. 9.

And to this is annexed the Promise, *Call upon me, and I will hear thee, and shew thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not*, Jer. 33. 3. that thou art not sensible of. But,

Secondly, Take heed that thine Heart go to God, as well as thy Mouth; let not thy Mouth go any farther than thou striveſt to draw thine Heart along with it. *David* would lift his heart and Soul to the Lord, and good reason; for so far as a man's mouth goeth along without his heart, so far it is but lip labour only; and though God calleth for, and accepteth the calves of the lips; yet the lips without the heart, argueth not only senseleſsneſs, but our being without sense of our senseleſsneſs; and therefore, if thou haſt a mind to enlarge in Prayer before God, see that it be with thy heart.

Thirdly, Take heed of affecting Expreſſions; and so to pleaſe thy self with the

the use of them, that thou forget not the Life of Prayer.

I shall conclude this Use with a Caution or two.

First, *Take heed thou do not throw off Prayer, through sudden perswasions that thou hast not the Spirit, neither prayest thereby.*

It is the great work of the Devil, to do his best, or rather worst, against the best Prayers. He will flatter your false dissembling Hypocrites, and feed them with a thousand fancies of well-doing, when their very Duties of Prayer, and all other, stink in the Nostrils of God. When he standeth at a poor *Joshua's hand to resist him* (Isa. 66. 5. Zech. 3. 1.) that is, to persuade him, that neither his Person nor Performances are accepted of God.

Take heed therefore of such false Conclusions, and groundless Discouragements: And though such Perswasions do come in upon thy spirit, be so

far from being discouraged by them, that thou use them to put thee upon further sincerity, and restlessness of spirit in thy approaching to God.

Secondly, *As such sudden temptations should not stop thee from Prayer, and pouring out thy Soul to God; so neither should thine own Heart's Corruption hinder thee.*

It may be thou mayest find in thee all those things before-mentioned, and that they will be endeavouring to put forth themselves in thy praying to him; thy business then is to judge them, to pray against them, and to lay thy self so much the more at the foot of God, in a sense of thy own vileness; and rather make an argument from thy vileness and corruption of heart, to plead with God for justifying and sanctifying grace, than an argument of discouragement and despair.

David went this way; *O Lord* (saith he,) *pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*, Psal. 25.

USE

USE II.

A word of Encouragement.

Secondly, To ſpeak a word, by way of Encouragement (to the poor tempted and caſt-down Soul,) to pray to God through Chriſt. Though all Prayer that is accepted of God, in reference to Eternal Life, muſt be in the Spirit; for that only maketh interceſſion for us, according to the Will of God, *Rom.* 8. 27. Yet, becauſe many poor ſouls may have the holy Spirit working on them, and ſtirring of them to groan unto the Lord for mercy, though through Unbelief they do not, nor for the preſent cannot believe that they are the People of God, ſuch as he delights in; yet foraſmuch as the truth of Grace may be in them, therefore I ſhall, to encourage them, lay down further theſe few Particulars.

1. That Scripture in *Luk.* 11. 8. is very encouraging to any poor Soul that

doth hunger after Chriſt Jeſus. In the 5th, 6th, and 7th Verſes, he ſpeaketh a Parable of a Man that went to his Friend, to borrow three Loaves; who, becauſe he was in bed, denied him; yet for his importunity-ſake, he did ariſe and give him; clearly ſignifying, that though poor Souls, through the weakneſs of their Faith, cannot ſee that they are the Friends of God; yet they ſhould never leave asking, ſeeking and knocking at God's Door for Mercy, *Mat.* 7. 7, 8.

Mark, ſaith Chriſt, *I ſay unto you, Although he will not ariſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity* (or reſtleſs deſires) *he will ariſe and give him as many as he needeth.*

Poor heart! thou crieſt out, that God will not regard thee; thou do'ſt not find that thou art a Friend to him, but rather an Enemy in thine heart, *by wicked works*, Col. 1. 21. and thou art as tho' thou did'ſt hear the Lord ſaying to thee, *Trouble me not, I cannot give unto thee*; as he in the Parable: Yet, I ſay, continue knocking, crying, moaning and bewailing

wailing of thy ſelf: *I tell thee, though he will not ariſe and give thee, becauſe thou art his friend; yet becauſe of thy importunity, he will ariſe and give thee as many as thou needeſt.*

The ſame in effect you have diſcovered, *Luke* 18. in the Parable of the unjuſt Judge, and the poor Widow; her importunity prevailed with him.

And verily, mine own Experience tells me, that there is nothing that doth more prevail with God, than importunity.

Is it not ſo with you, in reſpect of your Beggars that come to your doors? Though you have no heart to give them any thing at their firſt asking, yet if they follow you, bemoaning themſelves, and will take no nay, without an Alms, you will give them; for their continual begging overcometh you.

Are there bowels in you that are wicked, and will they be wrought upon by an importuning Beggar? *Go then and do the like*, Luke 11. 11.

It is a prevailing Motive, and that by good experience: *He will arise, and give thee as many as thou needest.*

2. Another Encouragement for a poor, trembling, convinced Soul, is, To consider the Place, Throne, or Seat, on which the great God hath placed himself, to hear the Petitions and Prayers of poor Creatures; and that is a *Throne of Grace*, Heb. 4. 16. The *Mercy-Seat*, Exod. 25. 22. Which signifieth, that in the days of the Gospel, God hath taken up his Seat, his Abiding-place, in mercy and forgiveness; and from thence he doth intend to hear the Sinner, and to commune with him, as he saith, *Exod.* 25. 22. (speaking before of the *Mercy-Seat*,) *And there will I meet with thee.* Mark; It is upon the Mercy-Seat: *There will I meet with thee, and there will I commune with thee, from above the Mercy-Seat.*

Poor Souls! they are very apt to entertain strange Thoughts of God, and his Carriage towards them; and suddenly

denly to conclude, that God will have no regard unto them; when yet he is upon the Mercy-Seat, and hath taken up his place on purpose there, to the end he may hear and regard the Prayers of poor Creatures.

If he had said, I will commune with thee from my Throne of Judgment; then indeed you might have trembled and fled from the face of the great and glorious Majesty. But when he saith, he will hear and commune with Souls upon the Throne of Grace, or from the Mercy-Seat: This should encourage thee, and cause thee to hope, nay, to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that thou mayest obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16.

3. There is yet another Encouragement to continue in Prayer with God, and that is this.

As there is a Mercy-Seat, from whence God is willing to commune with poor Sinners; so there is also by this Mercy-Seat, *Jesus Christ, who con-*

tinually beſprinkleth with his blood.

Hence it is called, *The Blood of ſprinkling*, Heb. 12. 14.

When the High-Prieſt under the Law, was to go into the Holieſt, where the Mercy-Seat was, *he might not go in without blood*, Heb. 9. 7.

Queſt. *Why ſo?*

Anſw. Becauſe, tho' God was upon the Mercy-Seat, yet he was perfectly juſt as well as merciful.

The Blood was to ſtop Juſtice from running out upon the Perſons concerned in the Interceſſion of the High-Prieſt, as in *Levit.* 16. 13, 14, 15, 16. To ſignifie, that all thine unworthineſs that thou feareſt, ſhould not hinder thee from coming to God in Chriſt, for mercy.

☞ Thou cryeſt out, that thou art vile, and therefore God will not regard thy Prayers. 'Tis true, if thou delight in in thy vileneſs, and come to God out of a mere Pretence. But if from a ſenſe of thy vileneſs, thou do'ſt pour out thy heart to God, deſiring to be ſaved from the

the guilt, and cleanſed from the filth, with all thy heart; fear not, thy vileneſs will not cauſe the Lord to ſtop his Ear from hearing of thee.

The Value of the Blood of Chriſt which is ſprinkled upon the Mercy-Seat, ſtops the courſe of Juſtice, and opens a Flood-gate for the Mercy of the Lord to be extended unto thee.

Thou haſt therefore, as aforeſaid, *boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt, by the Blood of Jeſus, that hath made a new and living way for thee, thou ſhalt not die*, Heb. 10. 19, 20.

Beſides, Jeſus is there, not only to ſprinkle the Mercy-Seat with his Blood; but he ſpeaks, and his Blood ſpeaks: He hath audience, and his Blood hath audience; inſomuch that God ſaith, when he doth but *ſee the blood, he will paſs over you, and the plague ſhall not be upon you*, &c. Exod. 12. 13.

I ſhall not detain you any longer: Be ſober and humble: Go to the Father,

ther, in the Name of the Son, and tell him your Case, in the assistance of the Spirit, and you will then feel the benefit of Praying with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

USE III.

A Word of Reproof.

This speaks sadly to you who never pray at all.

I will pray, saith the Apostle: And so saith the hearts of them that are Christians.

Thou then art not a Christian, that art not a Praying Person.

The Promise is, *That every one that is righteous, shall pray*, Psal. 32. 6.

Thou then art a wicked Wretch, that prayest not.

Jacob got the Name of *Israel*, by wrestling with God, *Gen.* 32. And all his Children bare that Name with him, *Gal.* 6.

But the People that forget Prayer, that

that call not on the Name of the Lord, they have prayer made for them, but it is such as this, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, O Lord, and upon the People that call not upon thy Name*, Jer 10. 25.

How likest thou this, O thou that art so far off from pouring out thine heart before God, that thou goest to bed like a Dog, and risest like an Hog, or a Sot, and forgettest to call upon God?

What wilt thou do when thou shalt be damned in hell, because thou couldst not find in thine heart to ask for heaven?

Who will grieve for thy sorrow, that didst not count mercy worth asking for?

I tell thee, the Ravens, the Dogs, *&c.* shall rise up in Judgment against thee, for they will according to their kind, make signs, and a noise for something to refresh them when they want it; but thou hast not the heart to ask for Heaven, though thou must eternally perish in Hell, if thou hast it not.

2. This

2. This rebukes you that make it your buſineſs to ſlight, mock at, and undervalue the Spirit, and praying by that.

What will you do when God ſhall come to reckon for theſe things?

You count it high Treaſon to ſpeak but a word againſt the King; nay, you tremble at the thoughts of it: And yet in the mean time you will blaſpheme the Spirit of the Lord.

Is God indeed to be dallied with, and will the end be pleaſant unto you?

Did God ſend his holy Spirit into the hearts of his People to that end, that you ſhould taunt at it? Is this to ſerve God? And doth this demonſtrate the Reformation of your Church? Nay, is it not the mark of implacable Reprobates?

O fearful! can you not be content to be damned for your ſins againſt the Law, but you muſt ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt?

Muſt

Muſt the holy, harmleſs, and undefiled Spirit of Grace; the nature of God, the promiſe of Chriſt, the comforter of his Children, that without which no man can do any ſervice acceptable to the Father: Muſt this, I ſay, be the burthen of your Song, to taunt, deride, and mock at?

If God ſent *Corah and his company headlong to hell, for ſpeaking againſt Moſes and Aaron*, Numb. 16. do you that mock at the Spirit of Chriſt, think to eſcape unpuniſhed? *Heb.* 10. 29.

Did you never read what God did to *Annanias* and *Saphira*, for telling but one lye againſt it? *Acts* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Alſo to *Simon Magus*, but for undervaluing of it, *Acts* 8. 18, 19, 20, 21.

And will thy ſin be a virtue, or go unrewarded with vengeance, that makeſt it thy buſineſs to rage againſt, and oppoſe its Office, Service and Help, that it giveth unto the Children of God?

It

It is a fearful thing to do despite unto the Spirit of Grace: compare *Mat.* 12. 31, with *Mark* 3. 30.

3. As this is the doom of those who do openly blaspheme the holy Ghost, in a way of disdain and reproach to its office and service: So also it is sad for you, who resist this Spirit of Prayer, by a Form of man's inventing. A very juggle of the Devil, that the Traditions of men should be of better esteem, and more to be owned, than the Spirit of Prayer.

What is this less than that accursed Abomination of *Jeroboam*, which kept many from going to *Jerusalem*, the place and way of God's appointment to worship, 1 *Kings* 12. 26, *&c.* and by that means brought such displeasure from God upon them, as to this day is not appeased?

One would think that God's Judgments of old upon the Hypocrites of that day, should make them that have heard of such things, take heed and fear to do so.

Yet

Yet the Doctors of our day are so far from taking of warning by the punishment of others, that they do most desperately rush into the same transgression (*viz.*) To set up an Institution of Man, neither commanded nor commended of God: and whosoever will not obey herein, they must be driven either out of the Land or the World.

Hath God required these things at your hands? If he hath, shew us where. If not (as I am sure he hath not) Then what cursed presumption is it in any, Pope, Bishop, or other, to command that in the Worship of God which he hath not required?

Nay, further: It is not that part only of the Form, which is several Texts of Scripture, that we are commanded to say; but even all must be confessed as the Divine Worship of God, notwithstanding those absurdities contained therein, which because they are at large discovered by others, I omit the rehearsal of them.

Again,

Again, Though a man be willing to live never so peaceably; yet because he cannot for Conscience-sake own that, for one of the most eminent parts of God's Worship, which he never commanded: therefore must that man be looked upon as factious, seditious, erroneous, heretical; a disparagement to the Church, a seducer of the People, and what not? Lord, what will be the fruit of these things! when for the Doctrine of God, there is imposed (that is more than taught) the Traditions of Men?

Thus is the Spirit of Prayer disowned, and the Form imposed; the Spirit debased, and the Form extolled: they that pray with the Spirit, though never so humble and holy, counted *Phanaticks*; and they that pray with the Form, tho' with that only, counted the *Vertuous*. And how will the favourites of such a practice, answer that Scripture which commandeth, that the Church *should turn away from such as have a Form of Godliness, but deny the Power thereof*? 2 Tim. 3. 5.

And

And if I ſhould ſay, That men that do theſe things aforeſaid, do advance a Form of Prayer of other mens making, above the Spirit of Prayer, it would not take long time to prove it.

For, He that advanceth the *Book of Common Prayer*, above the *Spirit of Prayer*, he doth advance a Form of mens making above it.

But this do all thoſe who baniſh, or deſire to baniſh them that pray with the Spirit of Prayer, while they hug and imbrace them that Pray by that Form only, and that becauſe they do it.

Therefore they love and advance the Form of their own, or others inventing, before the Spirit of Prayer, which is God's ſpecial and gracious Appointment.

If you deſire the clearing of the *Minor*, look into the Goals in *England*, and into the Ale-houſes of the ſame: and I believe you will find thoſe that plead for the Spirit of Prayer in the Goal, and them that look after the

For

Form of mens Inventions only, in the Ale-house.

It is evident also, by the silencing of God's dear Ministers, though never so powerfully enabled by the Spirit of Prayer; if they in Conscience, cannot admit of that Form of *Common-Prayer*.

If this be not an exalting the *Common-Prayer-Book* above either praying by the Spirit or preaching the Word, I have taken my mark amiss.

It is not pleasant for me to dwell on this; the Lord in mercy turn the hearts of the People to seek more after the Spirit of Prayer; and in the strength of that to pour out their souls before the Lord.

Only let me say, It is a sad sign, that that, which is one of the most eminent parts of the pretended Worship of God, is Antichristian; when it hath nothing but Tradition of men, and the strength of Persecution to uphold or plead for it.

The

The Concluſion.

I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe with this Word of Advice to all God's People.

I.

BElieve, that as ſure as you are in the Way of God, you muſt meet with Temptations.

II.

The firſt day therefore thou doſt enter into Chriſt his Congregation, look for them.

III.

III.

When they do come, beg of God to carry thee through them.

IV.

Be jealous of thine own heart, that it deceive thee not in thy Evidences for Heaven, nor in thy walking *with God* in this world.

V.

Take heed of the flatteries of false Brethren.

VI.

Keep in the Life and Power of Truth.

VII.

Look most at the things which are not seen.

VIII. Take

VIII.

Take heed of little sins.

IX.

Keep the Promise warm upon thy heart.

X.

Renew thy acts of Faith in the blood of Christ.

XI.

Consider the Work of thy Generation.

XII.

Count to run with the foremost therein.

Grace be with thee.

THE END.

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